

C61 2005 11-21
School of Music
University of Washington Seattle, Washington

presents

THE
CONTEMPORARY
GROUP

7:30 PM
November 21, 2005
MEANY THEATER

PROGRAM

1 IN THE MIRROR LAND (2003).....~~6:22~~.....JOËL-FRANÇOIS DURAND (b. 1954)
Version for flute and clarinet

Felix Skowronek, *flute* / William McColl, *clarinet*

LA MESURE DES CHOSES J. DURAND

2 I. *La mesure de l'air* for clarinet (1992) 9:22
Matthew Nelson, *clarinet*

3 II. *La mesure de la mer* for piano (1994) 9:00
Regina Yeh, *piano*

4 III. *La mesure de la terre et du feu* for oboe and viola (1999) 13:15
Nathan Hughes, *oboe* / Melia Watras, *viola*

INTERMISSION

~~5 MUSICA 66, for piano (1966).....~~8:21~~.....FRANCISCO KRÖPFL (b. 1931)
Ann Cumings, *piano*~~

6 PILLAR-SPEAK-AWAKE
for soprano and ensemble (2004).....12:33.....TOM BAKER (b. 1965)
Emily Greenleaf, *soprano* Dale Speicher, *percussion*
Tom Swafford, *violin* Dylan Rieck, *cello*
Jesse Canterbury, *clarinet* Jerrod Wendland, *piano*

7 CONCERTO, op. 24, for nine instruments7:17.....ANTON WEBERN (1883-1945)
I. *Etwas lebhaft*
II. *Sehr langsam*
III. *Sehr rasch*
Lana Abramova, *flute* Colby Wiley, *trombone*
Bruce Carpenter, *oboe* Matthew Wu, *violin*
Dmitri Pavlyuk, *clarinet* Brianna Atwell, *viola*
Josiah Boothby, *French horn* Akiko Iguchi, *piano*
Shelly Devlin, *trumpet* Juyong Kwon, *conductor*

PROGRAM NOTES

IN THE MIRROR LAND (2003) JOËL-FRANÇOIS DURAND

The work is laid out as a set of variations. During the first section, the initial gesture provides the impetus for constantly changing presentations of phrases built around ascending intervals. The first instrument (the flute, in this version) has here a leading role, while the second (the clarinet) acts as its shadow, either by simply altering timbrally the pitches of the other one, or by distorting its lines more actively.

As the two instruments become more equal in the slower middle section, what is then varied is not so much what appeared at the beginning like a motivic statement: the relationships between the two instruments become now the main focus of variation, as the lines of the polyphony are constantly spread between them which results in a timbral variation of similar pitches, or parts of lines. Now the melodic aspect, instead of being the sole focus of variation, acts as support for the timbral aspect, which comes to the foreground. In the last section, the fastest one, elements of the first section return, with now the clarinet in the leading role. The two instruments end as completely equal partners, in a texture similar to the slow middle section, only much faster.

In the Mirror Land exists in 3 versions, for flute/oboe, flute/clarinet or oboe/clarinet. The original version, for flute and oboe was written for Helen Bledsoe and Peter Veale who premiered it in 2003 in Brechemin Auditorium, during a concert given by the German group musikFabrik in celebration of Ferneyhough's 60th birthday.

LA MESURE DES CHOSES I-II-III (1992-1999) J. DURAND

These three works belong to a group of four pieces for solo instruments and duo, to be played either in succession in the same concert, or separately. *La mesure de l'air* is for solo clarinet, *La mesure de la mer* for piano, *La mesure de la terre et du feu* for oboe and viola. The last work, *La mesure du temps*, will be for percussion. The original conception for this set is based on Heraclitus' cosmogony which includes transformations of one element (earth-sea-air-fire, with my addition of time) into each other. My reflection on these transformations led me to interpret these natural elements in their relation to human experience: the air as the representation of the present, barely perceptible yet always in changing motion, like the immediate passage of time: it is the present in the human consciousness. In contrast, the "sea" is not experienced here in its materiality, its occasional fury, its "démésure" (excess), but in its capacity to make us perceive an image of eternity, to suggest a time beyond human measure. It is a "conceptualized," idealized sea; the sea as a vast mass with large and periodic motions; the flux of its deep, powerful and contradictory currents, with independent, non synchronized periodicities whose influences express themselves in the continuous motion of the surface. In the clarinet piece, a number of melodic models -archetypes- are constantly transformed,

their shapes being altered every time they come back, in length as well as in intervallic content. This provides the basis for the organization of musical phrases of constantly varying lengths, beyond the apparent repetition of small units; the texture is often changing, giving the sense of a creative activity renewing itself all the time. This same process of small constant transformations is applied to the predominantly harmonic texture in *La mesure de la mer*. But here, there unfolds progressively a sensation of larger rhythms, of global accelerations or slowing down. What was affected of a light, ethereal and playful character in *La mesure de l'air* becomes in *La mesure de la mer* an object of contemplation, serene and visionary.

La mesure des choses III was written immediately after the work for oboe and ensemble *La terre et le feu*, premiered in Paris by the Ensemble Intercontemporain in 2000. Although this work revisits the same two poles of temporal experience outlined above, this time by combining them within a more sequential form, one of the main ideas behind its composition was to write a smaller version of the oboe/ensemble piece, using almost all of its solo oboe part. But, far from being a simple transcription of the larger piece, the duo received a new dramatic shape through the re-arrangement of the musical elements of the concerto, now in a different order. Through this reorganization, the "narrative" content of the concerto was transformed into a new dramatic entity. Moreover, the momentum created by the musical material in the concerto was significantly altered because of the new contexts in which its elements were placed in the duo; the act of composing the duo became a constant re-assessment of their potential to generate a new dramatic shape. The technical challenge consisted then in the discovery of new formal strategies through the sacrifice of the essential organicity of the original work. In so far as this organicity existed in the concerto, the duo had to demonstrate that the apparent immanence of the original form was only one of the possible solutions, not the only and definitive one.

MUSICA' 66

FRANCISCO KRÖPFL

Argentinian composer and professor of composition, Kröpfl was born in Hungary in 1931 and has been living in Argentina since 1932. Disciple of Juan Carlos Paz, Kröpfl was the pioneer of electronic music in Argentina, where he founded in 1958 the Studio of Music and Phonology at the University of Buenos Aires, the first laboratory for electroacoustic music in Latin America. Kröpfl is one of the most prominent composers of the musical avant-garde in Argentina. His production includes electronic as well as instrumental music and audiovisual works. In 1977 he received a Guggenheim grant. In 1989 he was awarded a "Magistère" at the International Competition for Electroacoustic Music in Bourges (France). He is president of the Argentinian Federation of Electroacoustic Music (FARME), and music director of the Agrupación Nueva Música of the Department of Music Sonido and Image of the Centro Cultural Recoleta (Buenos Aires).

PILLAR-SPEAK-AWAKE

TOM BAKER

PILLAR

There are ways I could escape.

In sun strokes
I evaporate down to bleached bones,
releasing my liquid self into the
passing clouds
to fall again as rain.

In raptor dreams
my flesh is torn in scavenging haste
and the shreds of me travel
beak-caught, into the sky blue.

But I cannot move.

In thoughts
my body disintegrates into its
infinitesimal self,
all skin cells and eyelashes
carried away like windswept seeds.

I am that Biblical salt,
enflamed crystals of curiosity
trapped in a backwards glance
Stillness unforgiven

SPEAK

Teach me your tongues.
Drop your words, like diamonds,
around my strangled throat
a gleaming lover's necklace.

Transcribe me into a book of hours,
until the days fall away
and the blood-ink dries
In its silent sleeping well.

Cast your alphabet
into the clamp of my oyster heart
and harvest each iridescent word
from my still, submerged body.

Then, I will speak through shrouds,
in screams that split stars
until the sky slips down
And catches us, illuminated.

Collect my ashes
and press them into paper
each thin, smoky sheet
another page in a waiting tome.

AWAKE

Night's moons have descended
into the horizon's early blue
withdrawing their milky cloaks
behind the day's first burning.

Cups of sunlight rest rimful
awaiting our long, yawning throats
now open to the hour breaking,
open to the stretch of day.

In the squares of gold morning
Curled into the sleeping folds of
each other,
we entwine, unwilling to disentangle
our many-limbed dreams

Leaving starshine fields,
we lean into the stroke of sun,
rising, lightened at once
by the shapes of our beginning.

This Concerto (1931-34) is a supreme example of Webern's strictly musical application of disciplined procedures and of his continued striving for the perfection of "comprehensibility...the ultimate principle in the presentation of musical thought." This clarity of presentation is achieved by an absolute 'rightness' of internal balance... "by relating everything to what is already present in the principle part: by repeating in various combinations, by introducing the course of thematic events not only horizontally but also vertically; by aspiring towards an all-embracing unity, deriving as much as possible from one principal idea." In the first movement, tiny, three-note motifs are rhythmically defined in notes of varying lengths, and articulated with every conceivable differentiation of attack by the single-line instruments – as well as being formed into chords on the piano. A continual ebbing and flowing of the tempo punctuates the phrase-endings – characterizing the movement with a restless energy.

In the subdued *Adagio* of the second movement, the same melodic material is so organized that the slow-moving piano chords form a background entirely built from intervals of thirds and sevenths. These chords provide the central thread around which the other instruments trace a widely-spaced melody of contrasting colours. As in the first movement, shapes, pitches and melodic figurations return in a quasi recapitulatory manner but only with the purpose of placing themselves in yet other contexts.

The third movement is an abrupt reversal of mood: its springing *staccato* attacks and syncopated rhythms approach a brash abandon – especially in the insistently misplaced accents of the *fortissimo* coda – which is unique in Webern's output. The three-note motifs and chords are as evident here as in the previous movements, so that the work as a whole has the unity of a set of variations – being three different characterizations of the same threefold idea.

[after Susan Bradshaw]